



The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

Number 205

ISSN 0040-6406

Autumn 1993

A Danish Appreciation of Thoreau: Jacob Paludan's Foreword to *Livet i Skovene*

Laraine Fergenson

For many years, Henry Thoreau has been highly regarded by the Danes. In the preface to the *Variorum Civil Disobedience*, Walter Harding notes that Thoreau is "virtually a folk hero in Denmark" because of the moral support that those in the Danish Resistance to the Nazis derived from reading "Civil Disobedience."¹ One member of the Resistance, Martin Ashfield (Askfelt), corresponded for many years with Professor Harding and wrote a moving memoir explaining what Thoreau had meant to him in the dark period of the German occupation of Denmark during World War II.² The Danish love of nature, reflected in the national literature by such writers as N.F.S. Grundtvig, Steen Steensen Blicher, Jeppe Aakjær, and Johannes V. Jensen, makes it perfectly understandable that the positive Danish response to Thoreau the social activist would be matched by a warm reception to Thoreau the poet-naturalist.

Walden has been published in two Danish editions. The first, which appeared in 1949, was translated by Ole Jacobsen and published by Kunst og Kultur (Art and Culture [Press]) in Copenhagen. Thoreau's subtitle, "Life in the Woods," appears as the main title of the book (*Livet i Skovene*) with *Walden* in parentheses below it. The hardcover of this edition is richly bound in leather, and both the hardcover and the paperback contain striking illustrations by the artist Mads Stage. When the book was first published, Walter Harding commented: "It is one of the most beautifully illustrated editions of *Walden* that I have ever seen. It puts our American editions to shame. Many ... will want to own it for the illustrations alone."³

In addition to its wonderful drawings, the 1949 edition has an interesting foreword by the novelist and critic Jacob Paludan (1896-1975). Paludan was born in Copenhagen, but spent 1920 and 1921 living first in Ecuador and then in the United States. Although he had received a degree

in chemistry, he became a literary critic, translator, and editor upon his return to Denmark, and eventually gained fame as a novelist. His best-known work is the two-volume epic novel *Jørgen Stein* (1932-33). Paludan is considered a representative of the "lost generation" of writers between the two world wars, or as Paludan himself put it, "the generation that stumbled at the start."⁴ According to Sven Rossel, Paludan's worldview was deeply influenced by what he saw as the threat of American materialism.⁵ He is considered a romantic conservative who saw human salvation in a retreat from urbanism and materialism and a return to simplicity and nature. Rossel says that Paludan "constantly strove to understand the interplay between the human mind and nature,"⁶ so his admiration of Thoreau is not surprising.

The following translation⁷ generally follows the text quite closely, except in a few places where Paludan is writing idiomatically. When Paludan cites Thoreau, he sometimes renders the original very freely, so much so that it is at times uncertain exactly which excerpts from Thoreau he intends—since he does not identify them. Where necessary, I have provided the references to the relevant sections of Thoreau's writings.⁸

On Thoreau Jacob Paludan

Henry David Thoreau's time on earth spans the period from 12 July 1817 until 6 May 1862, and he did not let his days pass without awareness: as a twenty-year-old student at Harvard, he began his journal, which eventually filled thirty manuscript volumes. He occasionally gave lectures and was a very skilled pencil manufacturer. In 1839 he gathered the material for the book that ten years later was published under the title *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* in an edition of a thousand, of which seven hundred were unsold; he acquired by this means, as he said, "a large library of his own works."⁹ He wrote both poetry and prose; Emerson regarded his verse very highly, but it was his prose that eventually made its way into world literature, where he became known as one of the "stimulating nay-sayers." He could in fact also be rebellious through action; he once refused to pay a tax to a government that recognized slavery and war—an act which cost him his freedom, although just for a few hours. Also, he actively supported Emerson's protest against slavery.

But mostly he went his own way, when from July 1845 until September 1847 he took up residence in a house he built near Walden Pond in order to be close to nature. Here, it appears, he occasionally aided fugitive slaves.

In reality Thoreau's thought sweeps across the whole human horizon like a beam from an island lighthouse, although to the common mind he has come to represent, among poetical philosophers, primarily a passionate admirer of nature, especially the simple life in Nature. The points of similarity with Rousseau manifest themselves clearly, although there is no precise parallelism between the two, of whom indeed Rousseau became the more wide-ranging influence. But later nature worshipers can hardly measure up if one has just come from reading Thoreau. There was still in him a great pantheistic fervor; gradually over the years this feeling for the supernatural has diminished, and when experiments in nature are made nowadays, they often seem meager because the faith that can take one beyond the elementary steps is lacking. One can get what one wants from nature description—in the best case good comparisons: this is like that. Nature description is very far from ill-regarded; it is "always respectable" when another religion is lacking, and at present the fresh-air movement is about to try to replace it. But we remain in the dust despite the intense invocations of the seasons, colors, and climate; inspiration—not to speak of the innermost conviction of its possibility—is lost.

The point is that no matter how clear-headed, how completely scientific Thoreau's absorption in nature might seem, Nature was to him nevertheless ultimately just an occasion; his way went from the outer details toward the inner, toward spiritual experiences. One could in his time still ask *why* and count on being able to reckon with an intuitive recognition of universals, where one now asks *how* and goes scientifically from point to point. Thoreau, therefore, does not get counted in the modern more rigorous and drier philosophic world—in return he is counted in that of beauty and wisdom.

This American thinker's character cannot be appreciated at one glance. The hermit, we believe, is egocentric and self-centered, often because he is "disappointed with the world," which is often another way of saying that he has not been able to contribute anything to it. But Thoreau's short-lived and famous withdrawal to the woods was freely undertaken, an experiment, and he had admiring friends of whom the best and the one at whose side he now rests was no lesser man than the aforementioned Ralph Waldo Emerson. He has written some of his most personal pages on friendship, but it appears quite certain that according to these passages, friendship thrives best at a distance, where what separates is after all easiest to disregard. He is preoccupied with the essence of things, which is not the same as self-centeredness. One may begin to read in a critical frame of mind, but what one finds is sensitivity and sincerity; one realizes that one is learning something.

Although truly fascinated by the natural facts that his walks confront him with and delighted by the structure of a snowflake, he rejects both the microscope and the telescope as the types of things that falsify reality ("they actually confuse the pure human observation," thought Goethe also). And when he looks at the stars, he never recapitulates the instructions of astronomers: their wisdom is completely worldly and vulgar. But the earth he considers a living creature "with feelings"; is this to be considered naïve? But it must be added that he invoked the authority of science against ghosts and other common superstitions.

He approaches things, turns up stones, and follows

natural phenomena in all their phases like a scientist, but he can also sit on his doorstep from early morning until noon rapt in a reverie and grow "like corn in the night,"¹⁰ all while he conceives what the Orientals mean by contemplation and renunciation of ambitious toil. Despite his many strongly personal-poetic high points, it is nevertheless not chiefly his own mental life's fluctuations to which he devotes himself as a Romantic in the wild landscape. He is interested in everything. Nature is the door he both lingers in and goes through. Now the primary thought that appears in connection with the gospels of nature is that however idyllic everything may seem in the wild, closer inspection shows us "nature red in tooth and claw"; one must take a position: is man wild or civilized? Does man have a moral sense or does man approve that the weaker should be devoured by the stronger—this principle possibly translated from the animal to the human world?

He says in one place that the moral view is a jaundice and comes from man, but he elsewhere nevertheless admits regret over the killing of a turtle: "I have lost some self-respect. I have a murderer's experience in a degree."¹¹ Thoreau is never consistent in an ordinary way, but especially with regard to nature's atrocities, it is with the greatest difficulty that one can pin him down firmly with a slide rule and ordinary algebra. He is nevertheless not alone among those who have tasted droplets of the mystic experience to suspect a higher synthesis of good and evil, to suspect that what is, is with wisdom and necessity. His God is larger and more dreadful than the churchgoers'; he can make us shrink back—but read him carefully.

No, Thoreau is not cruel, however coldly he behaves toward the majority of human beings and their institutions. That human beings may have died without realizing it themselves is a thought to which he frequently returns, and it is thus understandable that he is indeed a sharp thorn in the side for modern social-preaching authors, for whom an instinct toward solitude is something outrageous and extremely maladjusted. But this is not at all to suggest that he wants something at the cost of making another do without—he soars completely above the problem under discussion. He is content with little and disdains the struggle for a more luxurious standard of living—each should have just the necessities of food, clothing, shelter, and fuel; an excess demoralizes the possessor and also the recipient when it is given away; one simply should not be able to give away anything at all. But one thing he wishes not to be without—the divine gift of poetic imagination. He is content with "the obscure life, the cottage of the poor and humble, the workdays of the world, the barren fields, the smallest share of all things but poetic perception. Give me but the eyes to see the things which you possess."¹²

He wishes for himself the life truly lived, where others desire dead goods. That he found it, and did not "pass away" prematurely, but managed to express it, is made clear by his works, from which, in intermittent fashion, thoughts and visions pour forth and fill the cup faster than one can drink. He writes closely and compactly, without taking time to explain anything to the slow-witted; one must read again, and it might happen that one will experience the truth of his own words: "Books can just open us to ourselves, and as soon as they render us this service, we put them aside."¹³ But only until there has been time for reflection. As he scorns "common sense," he rejects the elaborately logical style, near vision and ecstasy as he always is—but do not believe that the poet before him is therefore a delicate fairy-tale creature; no, he is "the toughest son of the earth and of heaven, and by his greater

strength his fainting companions will recognize the God in him."¹⁴ And the book that is loved is not written by him who has traveled farthest over earth's surface, but by him who has lived most deeply and been the most at home.

One can readily guess that with these words Thoreau had himself in mind. He truly endeavored to live deeply, which for him could never be the average life, and he remained faithful to his home, Concord, Massachusetts, where apart from a few journeys he lived from his birth to his death. Nor did the adventure of living like a lone wild creature near Walden Pond distance him from his native soil, but carried him even more deeply into it and gave him the material for his most famous book on life in the woods.

If Thoreau had known our days, when much has attained full flowering, which was in his time just a bud, when mechanized wars have lost any resemblance to natural struggles, his contempt, which was large then, would surely have risen to the boundless. As practical instruction, his example could never have meant anything to the majority—but it is in the final analysis not to the woods as such that he refers, but only to that which provides the best conditions for the growth of the mental or spiritual life. Now one can rest assured that a hermit would not be able to avoid speaking with some respect about the institutions of his time, even if he wishes them at a distance—they are his possible protection for his self-chosen existence. There are others who might consider it superfluous and secure his person for use in their labor camps.¹⁵

There is thus a portion of Thoreau's thought that holds no interest for the current time, but he still has his living and current side that will not become obsolete. It is still not too late for people to grope after his meaning, even if his experience is about to be lost to most. And however much Thoreau's central inner view may already have failed us, there remains nevertheless a fascination in the air. Thoreau, Walden—a breath full of the scent of pine needles, of a time with a deeper contact with life, of young rustling primeval forests, over which the moon goes her way "with a queen's majestic pace."¹⁶

Notes

¹ (New York: Twayne, 1962), p. 22.

² "Thoreau and the Danish Resistance," *Thoreau in Our Season*, ed. John Hicks (Boston: U Massachusetts P, 1966), pp. 20-21.

³ *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 30 (January 1950): 4.

⁴ Bredsdorff, Elias, et al., *An Introduction to Scandinavian Literature* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard; London and NY: Cambridge UP, 1951), p. 172.

⁵ Sven Rossel, "Paludan, Jacob," *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the Twentieth Century*, rev. ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1981), 3:466.

⁶ Rossel, "Paludan, Jacob," *Encyclopedia*, 3:467.

⁷ For their valuable help with my translation, I thank Claus Bruun and his family in Søborg, Denmark; Mikkel Langager Larsen, a student at Iona College in New Rochelle, New York; and Lars Ole Sauerberg, Professor and Chair of the Department of English at Odense University. I am grateful to Jens Jacob Paludan of Birkerød and to the Gyldendal Press of Copenhagen for permission to publish my translation of this essay.

⁸ I thank Professors Walter Harding and Robert Sattelmeyer for help in locating some of Paludan's borrowings from Thoreau.

⁹ This is Paludan's very free translation of Thoreau's

well-known statement "I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself." (*Journal*, 5:459; quoted in Harding, *The Days of Henry Thoreau* (New York: Knopf, 1967), p. 254.

¹⁰ See the "Sounds" chapter of *Walden*, paragraph 2; *The Variorum Walden*, ed. Walter Harding (New York: Twayne, 1962), p. 105.

¹¹ *Journal*, entry of 18 August 1854 (6:452).

References to the *Journal* are to the two-volume Dover edition (New York, 1962), which reproduces the pagination of the 14 volumes edited by Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906).

¹² *Journal*, entry of 28 August 1851 (2:428-29); see William Ellery Channing, *Thoreau: The Poet-Naturalist* (1902; rpt. New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1966), p. 87.

¹³ Compare Thoreau's journal entry of 19 February 1841: "A truly good book attracts very little favor to itself. It is so true that it teaches me better than to read it. I must soon lay it down and commence living on its hint" (1:216).

¹⁴ *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* ("Friday," paragraph 10), (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 291. In Paludan's version, the words "and endurance," which follow the word "strength" in *A Week* are not translated.

¹⁵ Paludan seems to mean here that without the protection of a democratic state to secure his chosen mode of life, the hermit might be the victim of those who would not recognize the importance of his type of existence and might find their own uses for him.

¹⁶ Compare the journal entries of 16 May 1851 (2:195) and 12 August 1851 (2:384). See also "Night and Moonlight" (paragraph 17) in *Excursions* (1863), rpt., ed. Leo Marx (New York: Corinth, 1962), p. 316, and Thoreau's *The Moon*, ed. Francis Allen (1927; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1985), p. 5.

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Walter Harding

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- . *Walden; or Life in the Woods*. Birmingham, Alab.: American Classics Library, 1990. 357pp. A leather-bound facsimile of the first edition, now being remastered.
- . *Walking*. An abridged reprinting of the essay, with photographs by John Wawrzonek. Berkeley, Calif.: The Nature Company, 1993. 120pp. \$35.00. Surely one of the most beautiful editions of one of Thoreau's works ever produced. Glorious full-color photographs throughout the work. We understand that huge

reproductions of some of these photographs are also available from The Nature Company.

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We are indebted to the following for information sent in for this bulletin: C. Adams, J. Barrett, A. Bates, W. Bly, M. Bodfish, R. Borser, D. Capra, J. Dawson, B. Dean, L. Dennis, M. Fischette, D. Fuller, R. Galvin, L. Harding, L. Henning, P. Huber, K. Kasegawa, J. Milani, J. Moldenhauer, W. Mott, W. Reid, G. Ryan, E. Schofield, M. Sherwood, H. Thomas, J. Welch, E. Witherell, and R. Winslow. Please keep Walter Harding (19 Oak Street, Geneseo, NY 14454) informed of items he has missed and of new ones as they appear.

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The following officers, Board members, and committee members serve the Society on an entirely voluntary basis—and without their help the Thoreau Society would simply not exist. The Society can *always* use more volunteer assistance, particularly on its committees, and members interested in serving the Society in any way are very strongly encouraged to contact a committee chair or any other officer of the Society to express their interest. Remember, no special skills are required to serve, and even relatively small investments of time are very helpful. Also, the officers and committee members ask for your comments and suggestions on how you think the Society might better serve your needs and interests.

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The Society's Financial Condition, 1992-93

[Editor's Note: Our treasurer Eric Parkman Smith and his able assistants, Pat Carey and Richard Peterson, worked many, many hours this summer to assemble statements of the Society's finances for the past two fiscal years. The figures below were taken from the statement of last fiscal year, ending 31 March 1993. Anyone interested in reviewing the figures from the fiscal year ending 31 March 1992 should contact your secretary, Brad Dean.]

(From Balance Sheet)**Assets**

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Current Assets: | |
| Cash | \$ 8,597 |
| Accounts receivable | 344 |
| Inventories | <u>7,164</u> |
| Total Current Assets | 16,105 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Land, Buildings, Equipment: | |
| Cost | 28,067 |
| Less accumulated depreciation | <u>(17,067)</u> |
| Net book value | 11,000 |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Collections, at cost: | |
| Library | 7,004 |
| Memorabilia | <u>5,238</u> |
| Net value | 12,242 |

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Investments: | |
| Bank savings accounts | 18,110 |
| Bank certificates of deposit | 16,000 |
| U.S. Treasury note | <u>5,000</u> |
| Total investments | 39,110 |

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Total Assets: | <u>\$78,457</u> |
|---------------|-----------------|

Liabilities and Fund Balances

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Current Liabilities: | |
| Accounts payable | \$ 6,017 |
| Withheld and accrued taxes | <u>863</u> |
| Total Current Assets | 6,880 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Deferred Revenue and Restricted Gift: | |
| Less accumulated depreciation | <u>12,098</u> |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Fund Balances: | |
| Investment in plant, collections | 23,242 |
| Donor restricted | 4,877 |
| Board restricted | 5,219 |
| Treasurer designated | 19,469 |
| Unrestricted | <u>6,672</u> |
| Total fund balances | 59,479 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Total Liabilities and Funds | <u>\$78,457</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|

(From Activity Report)

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Revenue and Support: | |
| Membership dues | \$19,533 |
| Book and gift shops, net | 22,059 |
| Greens sale, net | 1,312 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----|----------------------|--------------|
| Gifts and donations | 7,647 | Alabama | 9 | Nebraska | 4 |
| "Jubilee" gift | 4,000 | Alaska | 4 | Nevada | 2 |
| Admissions | 6,292 | Arizona | 10 | New Hampshire | 26 |
| Annual meeting | 1,508 | Arkansas | 6 | New Jersey | 40 |
| Investment income | 1,387 | California | 90 | New Mexico | 9 |
| Educational programs | 255 | Colorado | 17 | New York | 137 |
| Royalties | <u>224</u> | Connecticut | 44 | North Carolina | 30 |
| Total | 64,217 | Delaware | 3 | North Dakota | 2 |
| Expenses: | | District of Columbia | 5 | Ohio | 47 |
| Salaries and wages | 32,650 | Florida | 24 | Oklahoma | 4 |
| "Jubilee" celebration | 4,555 | Georgia | 18 | Oregon | 14 |
| Publications | 4,148 | Hawaii | 2 | Pennsylvania | 64 |
| Payroll taxes | 3,026 | Idaho | 5 | Puerto Rico | 1 |
| Postage | 2,943 | Illinois | 47 | Rhode Island | 11 |
| Annual meeting | 2,625 | Indiana | 22 | South Carolina | 7 |
| Utilities | 2,317 | Iowa | 7 | South Dakota | 3 |
| Office expense | 2,048 | Kansas | 9 | Tennessee | 14 |
| Insurance | 1,963 | Kentucky | 8 | Texas | 37 |
| Advertising | 1,820 | Louisiana | 7 | Utah | 4 |
| Professional service | 1,357 | Maine | 18 | Vermont | 11 |
| Maintenance | 1,295 | Maryland | 21 | Virginia | 33 |
| Telephone | 578 | Massachusetts | 261 | Virgin Islands | 2 |
| Fund raising | 481 | Michigan | 38 | Washington | 22 |
| Archives | 250 | Minnesota | 22 | West Virginia | 4 |
| Rent, Walden shop | 159 | Mississippi | 2 | Wisconsin | 22 |
| Supplies | <u>10</u> | Missouri | 13 | Wyoming | 3 |
| Total | 62,225 | Montana | 2 | | |
| | | | | U. S. MEMBERS | 1,281 |
| Operating surplus | 2,492 | | | Regular Memberships | 905 |
| Investment income | <u>223</u> | | | Life Memberships | 375 |
| Surplus for the year | 2,715 | | | Student Memberships | 33 |
| Fund balances, beginning of year | <u>56,764</u> | | | Family Memberships | <u>67</u> |
| Fund balances, end of year | <u>\$59,479</u> | | | TOTAL MEMBERS | 1,381 |

Geographical Profile of Members (as of 1 August 1993)

Having recently updated our membership list and put it into a more flexible database, we can present a profile of the geographical distribution of our 1,381 members. We have members in twenty-one countries other than the U.S., two U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, and all fifty of the United States. Of the 261 members in Massachusetts, 76 live in Concord and 22 live in the five neighboring towns (Acton [3], Bedford [4], Carlisle [1], Lincoln [13], and Sudbury [1]).

| | | | |
|------------------|------|-------------------------|------------|
| Argentina | 1 | France | 1 |
| Australia | 2 | Germany | 9 |
| Canada: | (47) | Iceland | 1 |
| Alberta | 2 | India | 3 |
| British Columbia | 7 | Israel | 2 |
| New Brunswick | 3 | Italy | 2 |
| Nova Scotia | 5 | Japan | 23 |
| Ontario | 18 | Korea | 1 |
| Quebec | 9 | The Netherlands | 1 |
| Saskatchewan | 4 | New Zealand | 1 |
| United Kingdom: | (12) | Republic of China | 2 |
| Channel Islands | 1 | Russia | 1 |
| England | 8 | Sweden | 2 |
| Scotland | 1 | Switzerland | 1 |
| South Wales | 1 | Yugoslavia | 1 |
| Wales | 1 | | |
| | | Non-U.S. Members | 114 |

Curator's Corner

Anne McGrath

What is the Thoreau Lyceum? This question is often asked by visitors who come to 156 Belknap Street in Concord. Our answer is that the Lyceum is a learning center for schools, colleges, and people who are reading, writing, and teaching on every level.

Although the Lyceum is not a museum in the ordinary sense of the word, we do have certain things that are connected with Thoreau and his friends. One of these is a copy of his survey map of Walden Pond. (About 80% of visitors do not know that Thoreau was a surveyor.) We also have old photographs of Thoreau country. (About 90% of visitors think of Walden as a little pool of sacred water deep in primeval woods.) These and many other artifacts help us to tell the story of Henry Thoreau, his friends, and his family.

Our mail is often full of requests for information on Thoreau and his contemporaries, as well as orders for books, both old and new, from the Lyceum bookshop. Our second-floor library is a favorite place for browsing, particularly by students from nearby colleges, who frequently use the train as a quick way to get here from Boston. (The Lyceum is just a short walk from the Concord Depot.) Many a theme, term paper, and dissertation has been born here.

We welcome visitors of all ages and interests. If you have never visited the Lyceum, please put it on your next travel plan. We will be glad to see you.

Notes & Queries

Official Thoreau Society t-shirts are now available in all sizes (S to XXXL) from the Thoreau Lyceum for \$10.00 plus \$3.25 postage and handling (add \$2.00 for XXL and XXXL). The shirts are ash gray with black printing. On the back of the shirt is a large reproduction of the 1856 Maxham daguerreotype of Thoreau over his signature, and on the front is a reproduction of Sophia Thoreau's drawing of the Walden house over the words "**The Thoreau Society, Inc.** / Concord, Massachusetts / Since 1941." Quantities are limited.

The Walden Woods Project is offering a 1994 "Walden Woods and Thoreau Country" calendar that is even more beautiful than its 1993 Thoreau calendar. The new calendar features the stunning work of John Wawrzonek, a Worcester-based photographer and Society member whose dye-transfer prints, as the *Boston Globe* has pointed out, "vibrate with life, texture, detail, and color." Calendars are available from the Thoreau Lyceum (156 Belknap Street, Concord, MA 01742; tel: 508-369-5912) or from WWP (18 Tremont Street, Suite 522, Boston, MA 02108; tel: 800-543-9911) for \$9.95 plus \$4.00 postage and handling.

The Walden Woods Project netted some \$1.3 million at the Labor Day benefit concert it sponsored at Foxborough Stadium near Boston. Some 50,000 friends of Walden Woods attended, and the Thoreau Society had ten volunteers at the stadium staffing informational tables and handing out literature, all under the watchful eye of Wes Mott, chair of our Executive Committee. Mott and the volunteers worked from 1 p.m. until 10 p.m., breaking only for the last hour and a half of the full-day concert.

Yankee (September 1993, p. 18), when queried why Thoreau used hair in plastering his Walden cabin, answered correctly that it was used as a binder in the lime and is nowadays replaced by wood fibre.

In an article entitled "Nature's See-Saw" published in the September 1993 *Land's End* catalog, essayist and novelist Edward Hoagland writes, "Vermont alone has perhaps a hundred thousand deer, and wild turkeys, reintroduced to the state in 1969, are nearly all over, so that, altogether, the New England region is richer in wildlife than when Henry David Thoreau was writing *Walden* a hundred-fifty years ago."

According to "Psychology's New Interest in the World beyond Self" by Daniel Goleman in the 29 August 1993 *New York Times*, modern psychotherapists are just catching on to Thoreau's idea that we are restored by communion with nature.

On 6 November 1993, the *Chapel Hill* [N.C.] *Herald* published a charming article on Charlotte Adams, the wife of our founding president, Raymond Adams, to commemorate her 90th birthday (5 November) and her lifelong political activism. Accompanying the article is a large color photograph of Ms. Adams wearing a sweatshirt that reads "Simplify, Simplify." Thoreau." The article ends with the following quotation from Ms. Adams: "Living so long has made me quite noted. I would have just had people say 'happy birthday' and leave it at that."

Translations of Thoreau's new book, *Faith in a Seed*, will be published soon in China and Japan.

The Thoreau Society of Japan held the first of its two conventions this year at Kitazawa Town Hall in Tokyo on 14 May. Among the speakers were Ichiro Iida on "Thoreau and American Indians," Sumie Iwao on "A Stylistic Approach to *Walden*," and Yuji Nakata on "Zen and American Thought, Mainly on Thoreau." Koh Kasegawa delivered the opening address and Hirotugu Inoue the closing address. Yoshinori Kato delivered the keynote

address. The Society held its second convention on 8 October at Hirosaki Gakuin University in Hirosaki, Aomori Prefecture. Featured speakers were Makiko Ono on "Communion with Nature in *Walden*, with Special Reference to Shirley MacLaine's *Out on a Limb*," and Katsumi Kamioka on "Life in the Woods Today: Anglers, Mrs. Lindberg, Snyder, and McKibben."

M. I. Bodfish of Orinda, California, a professional contractor, responded to Walter Harding's query about Thoreau's reference in *Walden* to a "dust hole" (see *TSB* 202, p. 7; *Walden* [Princeton edition], p. 43) by writing: "I have heard the term used to refer to an arrangement in simple cottages, in pre-building-code days, whereby there was a small trap door set in the floor, and this opened to the ground under the house. This kind of cabin or cottage had no basement and was built on posts or pier blocks, maybe six or ten inches above the earth. The housekeeper could raise the trap door of the dust hole and sweep the floor-sweeps out of it somewhat like the ash shoots in old-fashioned fireplaces."

R. D. Lawrence's *The North Runner* (New York: Holt, Rinehart Winston, 1978), an account of his experiences raising a wolf-dog, quotes frequently from Thoreau's writings, which are obviously part of his regular reading.

We were delighted to hear again recently from the Thoreau Foundation (63, 10th Main, 3HMT Layout, Tagore Nagar, Bangalore 560-032, India), which was established in 1989. It regularly conducts lectures and discussions related to Thoreau, publishes a bi-monthly newsletter entitled *Nature*, and encourages beautification of the landscape. A brochure explaining its activities may be obtained from Sri R. Viswamurthy at the above address.

We note with great sadness the death in August of Nellie Teale, the widow of Edwin Way Teale. She was a life member of our society and always interested in its activities.

Clarence Burley calls our attention to the fact that the *Boston Weekly Messenger* for 23 October 1823 notes that John Thoreau won a \$2.00 prize for his pencils at the Brighton Cattle Show. Although it has long been known that he later won a number of such prizes, this is by far the earliest on record.

We understand that the Thoreau-Alcott House on Main Street is once more up for sale, this time for \$1,295,000.

The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an informal gathering of students and admirers of Henry David Thoreau. Joel Myerson, president; Eric Parkman Smith, treasurer; Bradley P. Dean, secretary. Dues: \$20; students \$10; family \$35; benefactor \$100; life \$500. The Society maintains an educational and retail center, the Thoreau Lyceum, at 156 Belknap Street, Concord, MA 01742, tel: (508) 369-5912; and an administrative center in the Department of English at East Carolina University. Address communications to the secretary at the Thoreau Society, Inc., Department of English, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858-4353, tel: (919) 355-0620, fax: (919) 355-5280.